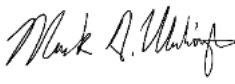


MEMORANDUM

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

DATE: June 10, 2020

TO: Mayor Bliss and Commissioners

FROM: Mark A. Washington 
City Manager

SUBJECT: Police Reform

Our community shares the international frustration and anger over the murder of George Floyd and the systemic racism and oppression that continues to exist. We must now continue the work of undoing the system of inequality and racism that has plagued our communities for many generations.

While realizing we have more work to do, is also important to note this community has made progress in some key areas and has:

- Adopted a strategic plan with a strong equity lens
- Implemented equity training with every department with the National Equity Project
- Revised Youth Interactions Policy and incorporated into Police policies
- Created a Foreign Nationals Policy
- Hired Civilian Staff to Redeploy Sworn Staff per the Deployment Study
- Improved the Firearms and Replica Weapons Ordinances
- Created the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Ordinance
- Created Biased Crime Reporting Protection
- Created the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability
- Created the Office of Equity and Engagement
- Hired New Police Chief
- Created 2nd Shift Community Police Officers
- Updated the Human Rights Ordinance
- Published all Police Policies online
- Implemented Body-Worn Cameras

I have and continue to listen to members of our community about their desire for more progress while engaging the very talented and committed staff in our organization. We

recognize the need to embrace new ideas, methods, and approaches that may have been uncomfortable in the past. Since racial inequities have been historically part of our society, the City continues to make a conscious deliberate choice to prioritize equity and inclusion. I have been very deliberate in considering feedback from the Mayor, commissioners, community and staff. Therefore, I am bringing forward proposed changes and improvements that are aligned with our vision for Grand Rapids to be nationally recognized as an equitable, welcoming, innovative and collaborative city with a robust economy, safe and healthy community, and the opportunity for a high quality of life for all.

I have directed our Police Chief, Oversight and Public Accountability Director and Equity Officer to work on improving or implementing the following efforts between now and the next 60 days:

- Improve use of force policy by explicitly banning chokeholds
- Improve our policy requiring officers to de-escalate situations, where possible, by communicating with subjects, maintaining distance and otherwise eliminating the need to use force
- Require officers to give a verbal warning in all situations whenever possible before using deadly force
- Require officers to exhaust all other reasonable alternatives, including non-force and less-lethal force options, before resorting to deadly force
- Improve our policy by requiring officers to intervene and stop excessive force used by other officers and report these incidents immediately to a supervisor
- Update the policy on banning officers from shooting at moving vehicles (GRPD previously banned this practice)
- Make sure all uniformed officers have names on all uniforms while in public to include events involving civil unrest
- Ensure Office of Oversight and Public Accountability reviews and releases a comprehensive report regarding the status of all prior community-police relations studies, recommendations and commitments. This report will be released within the next 30 days.
- Continue to make structural changes to the Grand Rapids Police Department to address recommendations made in the deployment study, Lamberth Traffic Study and 21st Century Policing report. More civilian employees are needed in Public Information and Senior Administrative roles.
- Identify funding to expand the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability. I have asked the Police Chief to assist in this funding initiative.
- Establish a Community Police Advisory Council that provides ongoing support and advice to the Police Chief on plans, strategies and policies.
- Increase and enhance training offered by Office of Equity and Engagement and the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability related to equity, justice, implicit bias and other related topics for all City staff, including Police

- Work with Economic Development, Our Communities Children, OEE and OPA to work with the business community to increase summer job opportunities for youth
- Collaborate with community to support programming that provides information, awareness and resources to be an ally to address systemic and institutional racism
- Improve resident engagement by creating more opportunities to represent groups to promote safety and accountability and prevent crime
- Office of Equity and Engagement will host an event in partnership with OPA led by subject matter experts regarding processing and healing from trauma and vicarious trauma related to racism and use of force
- Create pathways for ongoing input and support from the community for the plan, strategies and tactics of GRPD
- Continue to complete the Office of Oversight and Accountability's strategic plan and implement additional strategies to increase restorative justice programming, elevating community voice and public safety engagement.
- Ensure the Police Department works with Office of Oversight and Public Accountability, Human Resources, Grand Rapids Public Schools, colleges, community organizations and labor groups to increase efforts in recruiting more diverse candidates

The following items require more time and consideration:

- Open public meetings for labor negotiations – currently the City and all labor unions are required to meet on mandatory subjects on bargaining and have done so outside of public meetings, having open meetings cannot be done without the consent of both parties. Currently, contracts are in place until June 30, 2022. We will share the idea with the labor groups and discuss in future labor conversations. This cannot be unilaterally determined by management or the elected body.
- Expanded power for the Civilian Appeal Board – I have requested a legal opinion from the department of law on this matter.
- Settlement with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights on its ongoing investigation into the patterns and practices of the Police. The City Attorney continues to review this and will provide an update to the City Commission.
- Redirect funding from Police toward economic development, housing and other community programs. By Charter, 32% of general funding must be allocated to the Police and the City Commission just recently adopted the budget on May 21, 2020 for fiscal year 2021. We are in the middle of a recession and currently have a high demand for policing resources. More discussions are needed with the City Commission on the implications of any budget reallocations. However, some adjustments can be made to allocate additional funding to the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability.

As you are aware, we have one more town hall meeting tonight, and I look forward to providing a briefing on these matters on June 16 at the morning Committee of the Whole meeting and share any additional updates. Let me know if you have questions.